United Nations ST/IC/2009/18

Secretariat

13 April 2009

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2009 competitive examination for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers in 2009, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 and ST/AI/2000/1, as amended by ST/AI/2003/1.

2. The competitive examination for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers will be held tentatively on **4 September 2009** in New York, Geneva and other locations according to the number and location of qualified examinees convoked for the examination. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers will be filled. When vacancies occur, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as qualified external applicants. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or to special missions are considered external applicants for the purpose of this examination. Such applicants, if successful, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Spanish-language posts as they occur in the language services in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and Santiago. Assignments are subject to rotation and translators/précis-writers may thereafter be called upon to serve at other United Nations duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Translators/précis-writers are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in language posts. The assignment of staff members of the

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2009.

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United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 13 to 16 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Spanish as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Spanish and an excellent knowledge of English and one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, French or Russian). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that applicants' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Applicants who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For that purpose, staff members should give a clear explanation on the P.11 or Personal History Profile (PHP) form of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed;

(c) Hold at least a three-year first-level degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status in which Spanish is the language of instruction or hold a university degree from a recognized school of translation;

(d) Have a knowledge of word-processing programs.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications, **22 May 2009**, will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement of a degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applicants should submit with their applications a one-page essay in Spanish, explaining why they wish to work as a translator/précis-writer in the United Nations. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified applicants based on a review of the qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4, and on an assessment of the language skills demonstrated in the application. Convoked examinees may be required to submit evidence of degrees, knowledge of languages and/or relevant experience. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the applicant is best able to work. Applicants' claims to Spanish as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

8. The written examination, to be held on **4 September 2009**, will consist of three papers:

(a) Translation into Spanish of a general text in English and completion of a multiple-choice exercise on English to Spanish translation and Spanish usage (three and a half hours). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only examinees who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into Spanish of one text chosen by the examinee from a total of four texts, one in each of the following official United Nations languages: Arabic, Chinese, French or Russian (one hour and a half);

(c) The examinee's choice of one of the following:

(i) Translation into Spanish of one English text, to be chosen by the examinee from a total of four specialized texts (economic, legal, social/political or scientific/technical) (one hour and a half);

or

(ii) Translation into Spanish of one text chosen by the examinee from a total of four texts, one in each of the following official United Nations languages: Arabic, Chinese, French or Russian. The language selected must be different from the one chosen in exercise (b) (for example, if the French text was selected in (b), the examinee will now choose either the text in Arabic, Chinese or Russian) (one hour and a half).

9. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, examinees may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

10. On the basis of the results of the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected examinees to a competency-based interview. Proof of degrees and certificates will be required from all examinees who are successful in the written part of the examination prior to the interview. The Board will interview each examinee to assess whether she or he possesses the competencies required for the position. Examinees may also be required to take some additional short tests at the time of the interview (including a sight translation test). The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, examinees who are invited for an interview **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of each examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All examinees will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results.

12. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are expected to accept it.

13. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Spanish-language translators/précis-writers for a trial period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned

at their respective levels. Successful candidates are expected to be able to use computer workstations.

14. Successful candidates in translation assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first six months of their trial period in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

15. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

16. In accordance with the needs of the service/section, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

17. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it together with a copy of the P.11 or PHP form and the essay mentioned in paragraph 8, no later than **22 May 2009**, to:

2009 competitive examination for Spanish-language
translators/précis-writers
Examinations and Tests Section
Strategic Planning and Staffing Division
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575 A
United Nations Secretariat
New York, NY 10017
Fax No.: (1-212) 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications received after the above deadline will not be considered. To the extent possible, **applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early and, preferably, by e-mail**. Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. Incomplete applications, including those without the essay, will **not** be considered.

18. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their applications to the Strategic Planning and Staffing Division of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by **22 May 2009**, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section.

Application (for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat only)

2009 competitive examination for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s)? _____

What is your main language?[3] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 or PHP form and attach it to this application. Describe your educational background and work experience (giving dates and length of time) in the areas of translation, if any.

Applications submitted without a P.11 or PHP form or without the one-page essay in Spanish mentioned in paragraph 8 will NOT be considered.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2009/18 and I understand that if I am successful in the 2009 competitive examination for Spanish-language translators/précis-writers and recommended for inclusion in the rosters, my assignment as a Spanish-language translator/précis-writer will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 13 to 16 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____

Notes

[a] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the applicant is best able to work. Applicants' claims to Spanish as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.